

*Administration of Barack H. Obama, 2009*

**Remarks Honoring the 2008 Stanley Cup Champion Pittsburgh Penguins**  
*September 10, 2009*

*The President.* Thank you. Please, everybody, have a seat.

First of all, I'm sorry to keep you guys waiting. I—the—I have all these things I've got to do—[*laughter*—as President. This is by far the most fun thing that I'm doing today. So welcome to the White House. We are extraordinarily pleased to have the world champion Pittsburgh Penguins with their third Stanley Cup.

Just a couple of acknowledgements in the house: Pittsburgh mayor, Luke Ravenstahl—where's Luke? Where's the mayor? I thought he was around here. Well, he should be. [*Laughter*] Senator Bob Casey—is he around? Come on, Bob Casey; Senator Arlen Specter in the house; Representative Mike Doyle—I know he's a fan; Representative Jason Altmire; Representative Chris Carney; Representative Tim Murphy; and Representative Glenn Thompson. And even though he's from Iowa, this guy grew up in Pittsburgh, is still a fanatic, and that is Secretary Tom Vilsack, Agricultural Secretary.

I have to say all of you look pretty good without your playoff beards. They're pretty good looking guys without all that. [*Laughter*] I want to congratulate all the fans back home who made Mellon Arena such a tough place for visiting teams this year. With the Steelers and the Penguins, I guess it's a good time to be a sports fan in Pittsburgh.

I was complaining about this—it's been a while since Chicago won anything, coach. [*Laughter*] And I'm not happy about that. But as many of you know, I have a special place in my heart for Pittsburgh, and so if it can't be the Blackhawks, then the Penguins aren't a bad choice.

The last time this team was here was during the playoffs against the Washington Capitals. It was a hard fought series, but it showed everybody how enthusiastic our hockey fans are also here in the Nation's Capital.

I want to thank Coach Dan for being here. Not only did Dan win the Stanley Cup in his first season as head coach—that does not happen very often—but he also brought a new sense of purpose and excitement to the team and made sure his players had a little fun along the way.

Having Mario Lemieux here is a pretty big deal. He won a couple of these trophies as a player, but this is his first as an owner, and he's still got a big smile on his face, so I guess it feels pretty good this way too.

I want to thank Willie O'Ree for joining us. Willie is a hockey pioneer in his own right, who has worked tirelessly to make sure kids from every background can learn the lessons that hockey has to offer. So we are grateful to you, sir. Please give him a big round of applause.

And this team would not be here without two of its youngest members. So first of all, I want to congratulate Sidney Crosby on becoming the youngest captain in history to win the Stanley Cup and Evgeni Malkin for being the third-youngest player ever to be named playoff MVP.

You know, we've had a lot of championship teams visit the White House—I've seen a lot of trophies—there is something special about the Stanley Cup, other than it just being really

big. [Laughter] Winning this trophy takes a whole new level of sacrifice. It takes a group of players who can persevere through injuries and pain and setbacks and seven game series. Above all, it takes a team that is willing to stick together, because nobody wins the Stanley Cup on their own.

And that's why, after the last buzzer sounded back in June, these players took the Cup on the road to say thank you to all the people who helped get them here. They took it on fishing trips and stopped by neighborhood barbecues; they visited elementary schools and brightened the days of children who were in hospitals. I think this Cup has even held a baby or two. So this is a team that understands that being a champion doesn't end when you step off the ice.

Service is a way of life for these players back in Pittsburgh. Earlier today, Willie and the guys put on a clinic for kids here at Fort Dupont as part of our United We Serve summer of service. And besides teaching the kids a few moves, they stressed the importance of staying in school and leading active and healthy lifestyles. I understand we've got some of those young players from Washington, DC, and Pittsburgh here with us—go ahead and wave, guys. There you go.

And that's what the Stanley Cup is all about, not just having your names engraved alongside the best players in history, but also giving back to others along the way. And this spirit of service helps to strengthen our communities, it strengthens our country, and I know this team gets a lot in return for it as well.

So I want again to just say congratulations for your outstanding season, for not just your athleticism, but also your sportsmanship. Coach, we're very proud of you. Thank you very much.

*Dan Bylsma.* Mr. President, it's certainly an honor and a privilege to receive the invitation to come here today, and the hospitality you showed our team and our families and the organization, it was very gracious, and we appreciate it very much. And on behalf of all the people in our organization, but especially the players behind me, we'd like to present you with a jersey—our captain, Sidney——

*The President.* This is what I'm talking about. [Laughter]

Can I just make one more point? Sidney must be really fast because there are some big hockey players, and he's not one of them. [Laughter] But you know, he's got some speed and some skill. So thank you everybody. We are thrilled—can we get a picture with the Cup in the background here?

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:45 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Dan Bylsma, head coach, Pittsburgh Penguins; and William "Willie" O'Ree, Director of Youth Development, National Hockey League.

*Categories:* Addresses and Remarks : Stanley Cup champion Pittsburgh Penguins.

*Locations:* Washington, DC.

*Names:* Altmire, Jason; Bylsma, Dan; Bylsma, Dan; Carney, Chris; Casey, Robert P., Jr.; Crosby, Sidney; Doyle, Michael F.; Lemieux, Mario; Malkin, Evgeni; Murphy, Timothy; O'Ree, William "Willie"; Ravenstahl, Luke; Specter, Arlen; Thompson, Glenn; Vilsack, Thomas J.

*Subjects:* Sports : Hockey; United We Serve initiative; Voluntarism.

*DCPD Number:* DCPD200900699.